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Citizen of the year

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THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015

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Shipping season sets sail



ALLAN BENNER/
QMI AGENCY
MAGARA

Cpt. Daryl
Brain tips
his hat,
with Port
Colborne
Mayor John
Maloney
and Chief
Engineer
Dave
Cooke,
during the
top hat
ceremony
in Port
Colborne,
Thursday.
See Page 2.



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UPFRONT

■ WELLAND CANAL: Top hat ceremony two weeks late

Another icy start to shipping season

ALLAN BENNER
QMI Agency Niagara

In 44 years of sailing the Great Lakes, Capt. Daryl Brain said he has never seen as much ice in the waterway as he has recently.

"The last two years — last year and this year — it's been pretty extreme ice. I was out Jan. 26, and the whole of Lake Erie was frozen over," Brain said Thursday while stopped at Lock 8 in Port Colborne.

He was sailing the CSL Baie Comeau, the first downbound ship of the canal's 186th season. Along with chief engineer Doug Caslin, he participated in his first-ever top hat ceremony at Lock 8 Park.

"Even back in the 1970s ... we didn't have this kind of extreme ice," Brain said.

He recalled about a decade of "really good ice" at a time when the lakes were smaller and the winter weather forced an earlier end to the shipping season.

"But it's been bad for the last couple of years," Brain, a St. Catharines resident, said.

The winter's cold snap has been cold enough to delay the opening of the canal for two weeks — opening in April for the first time in 18 years, said Alvin Ghirardi, St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp.'s maintenance, planning and logistics manager.

Ghirardi joined Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney, Region Chair Alan Caslin and provincial constituency assistant Bob Saracino during the ceremony, which also featured Town Crier Thomas Pekar and an audience of more than 100 spectators.

Despite the difficult start to last year's shipping season, Ghirardi said 40-million tonnes of cargo still passed through the waterway.

"That was the best result since the financial crisis of 2008," she said.

Ghirardi said the number of ocean-going vessels that sailed through the seaway last year was unprecedented in recent history.

"On multiple occasions in 2014, there were more than

50 ocean-going vessels in the Seaway system and activity among our domestic carriers was also very strong."

After the difficulties shipping companies faced a year ago, Ghirardi said getting cargo moving again this year "is not going to be easy."

"However, I can say once again that those involved in the marine transportation industry along the Welland Canal are up to the task."

And in the months ahead, Ghirardi said the Seaway hopes to at least repeat last year's performance.

Meanwhile, the St. Lawrence Seaway is continuing with its nearly \$500-million modernization program, which includes equipping several Welland Canal locks with new technology, such as adding hands-free mooring equipment to Locks 1, 2 and 3.

The system, which eliminates the need to manually move steel products off vessels, was previously installed at Lock 7, and a year earlier Lock 8 was equipped with a prototype of the hands-free mooring system.

"The modernization project,

which also includes the automation of locks, will result in a safer environment and reduce our operating costs," Ghirardi said.

Caslin shared his hopes "for another great shipping season."

"I hope it's as good as last year."

The Baie Comeau was sailing through the canal empty, with plans for a U-turn before transiting the Welland Bay to pick up a load of grain.

Brain said his three-year-old Triton-class vessel seems to be more than a match for the

weather.

"They're great ships," he said. "I haven't had any issues. We can run them late through the year and early in the spring. They have all kinds of power. They're good strong ships."

Canadian and U.S. Coast Guard cutters have been escorting the first of the lakes to venture out this spring.

"Without the cutters, that's one track, then you're going to get banged up in this heavy ice," he said.

allan.benner@sunmedia.ca



Capt. Daryl Brain signs Port Colborne's guest book as Mayor John Maloney holds his hat during the top hat ceremony on Thursday in Port Colborne.

ALLAN BENNER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

LOCAL NEWS

■ CHAMBER AWARDS: Gail Todd receives top honour

Boutique owner named Port Colborne citizen of year

MARYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

She may not be a lakeside city resident, but Gail Todd eats, sleeps and breathes all things Port Colborne.

There are few events the local businesswoman isn't involved in and few days you won't find her promoting the community and all it has to offer.

Todd was named citizen of the year at the annual President's Awards gala held March 12 at the Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce.

The owner of Something Else, a West St. boutique that features unique "upcycled" fashion and decor items, was taken aback by the unexpected honour.

"I'm more used to nominating than being the nominee," Todd said while standing in her colourful shop, which she's owned since 2011.

"Every year, I nominate."

She called it "humbling" to be considered amongst the likes of the many community volunteers and advocates who have previously held the title, including her own nominator, Cathy Boggioc.

In an unconventional move by the chamber, Boggioc was named citizen of the year in 2014 alongside husband Larry and local volunteer Nancy Salvage.

"It really is an honour that someone took the time to write something about you that really means something," Todd said of her own nomination.

"You don't do things for the lime-light or for the honours. You do it because it's the right thing to do."

Along with running her popular business, Todd is a member of the Clarence St. Connection — a group of merchants who work to draw visitors

to their Clarence St. shops — and also the Downtown Business Improvement Area board.

She helps to organize the city's annual Art Hop and the panels set on the Canal Days starting committee and the local chamber's board.

Being an involved citizen is not an option, but a responsibility, said the 54-year-old.

"When you see something that needs doing, do you it?"

The Welland resident credited her parents and grandparents for instilling in her the importance of giving back to the community.

Every little action counts, she said, whether it's offering a simple smile, picking up litter or sweeping the sidewalk in front of a business to make it look more presentable.

"We all do it for Port Colborne. We're all ambassadors for the city, no matter what we do."

Todd shared her appreciation for the work the city's wealth of volunteers take on "behind the scenes for the greater good."

"Those are the people who inspire me — the volunteers, the diehards," she said.

"It's the ladies who are in their 80s and 90s volunteering and serving up and making pies at Araheila's (Tea Room). It's a little thing, but it's a big thing."

Todd stressed the importance of "celebrating each other's successes and triumphs, however large or small" both in the business community and the community at large.

"It's about building up, not tearing down."

maryanne.firth@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @mfirth4life



MARYANNE FIRTH/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

Gail Todd, owner of Something Else, was recently named Port Colborne's citizen of the year by Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce. Todd is pictured with her award on Thursday.



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Be wary of campaign promises to reduce taxes

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I'm here to save the taxpayers money."

That is a refrain we've heard since the first democracy in ancient Athens. There isn't an election that passes where some politician doesn't promise you they'll fight the fatcats and the bureaucrats to bring the spending of public money under control.

If you just vote for them, they say, they will reduce your taxes and stop wasteful spending.

The truth, though, is that not only is the promise often empty, it is usually nowhere near as easy to achieve as the rhetoric would have you believe.

Despite what the politicians say, reducing public spending, and therefore taxes, is complicated with less wiggle room than you'd think.

Frankly, I don't envy anyone who chooses to grapple with reducing public spending because it is a hideously difficult task.

Take the Niagara Regional Police budget, by way of a for instance.

It's a pig — \$134 million and rising. For context, when I started covering the NRP back in the late 1990s, it was a big deal that the police budget had crept over \$100 million. It's obviously continued to grow ever since.

It is so big that every year the service, the police board and the regional government do this nearly pointless budget square dance. The police submit a budget, the regional council says it is too big, demands cuts be made, then the police do a bit of trimming here or there and SHAZAM! another budget passes.

The thing is all that hand wringing and debate doesn't ever do very much to save you, the tax-paying citizen, any real money.

Why? Because most of the police budget — even as it grows — is essentially fixed and all things being as they are, there isn't much any politician can do about it.

More than 90% of the NRP budget is consumed on human resources — salaries and benefits. Those figures are established through collective bargaining and there is no real way to reopen or rip up these contracts.

Then there is the costs of doing the things police are mandated to do, such as patrol Niagara's waterways even though many are technically federal government property.

On top of that you have the necessary costs of replacing equipment, cars, weapons and uniforms, along with the ever rising expense of police investigations.

A couple of complex homicide or drug trafficking investigations and the NRP can burn through its overtime budget, and there is no guarantee the next crime won't require that kind of investment in resources to solve.

After that, there is a tiny bit of money for things that police might want but don't need, or capital projects that can be deferred or cancelled. We're talking only a few million dollars which, given the mammoth size of the budget, isn't really that significant.

That is where the annual budget cuts are made, but they do nothing to stem the rising costs of policing, nor do they do much to reduce the annual tax levy.

Ultimately, if you wanted to cut back on the cost of local policing, you'd have to hit that 90%. Which means you'd have to slash

salaries or reduce the size of the service. And good luck with that. No politician with any common sense or understanding of how policing works would venture down that road.

I mention all of this because the current police board is made up of members who have stated, repeatedly, they are there to save money for the taxpayer and bring police spending "under control."

Well, that is what is under control, other than to point out that policing is expensive. Which really isn't an argument.

The only way to really reduce costs long term is to invent an entirely new way of funding and operating police departments. That kind of rethinking may well be inevitable and necessary as the overall tax burden becomes increasingly untenable.

Trouble is, I've not heard anything particularly innovative from a board with key members seemingly unclear on where its authority begins and ends.

So at the moment, all the talk about reigning in police spending is pointless noise.

It's just a lot of screaming into a hurricane.

Shipwrecks — Fort Levis

SKIP GILLHAM
Special to QMI Agency Niagara

The small coastal freighter Fort Levis spent 30 years in Canadian service under three different names. It was built at Lauzon, Quebec, in 1962 and initially sailed as Polaris Explorer. While most comfortable serving ports along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, the vessel was a Seaway trader in 1967.

It was sold to Agence Maritime in 1970 and renamed Fort Levis. Its work changed little and the ship made its only other visit to the Great Lakes in 1977. Three years later, the vessel was resold to Pudlister Trading for Newfoundland service under the name of Marine Eagle until it was "sold foreign" in May 1992.

Available work for ships only 49.8 metre long, the size of this vessel, was evaporating around Canada but, a buyer for the still sound hull was found in May 1992. Fort Levis was renamed and headed south as Christopher Martin for service under the flag of Honduras. It was renamed Altagrace Marine on Feb. 14, 1995, but was lost two years later. The ship was reported to have sunk near Tolu, Colombia, during the week ending March 16, 1997, but other details of its loss seem to be available.



SUMMITTED PHOTO

Fort Levis at Sorel, Que., on Jan. 18, 1976, in a photo by Rene Beauchamp.

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Police searching for crash witness

Police are searching for a woman who may have witnessed a crash in Pelham on Friday, March 27.

At 11:59 p.m., a collision occurred between two cars at the intersection of Quaker Rd. and Line Ave.

One driver was injured and the other driver was arrested for impaired driving offences.

Niagara Regional Police are trying to locate a female who was at the scene and may have observed the charged driver's actions as the crash occurred.

The woman, who was alone in the vehicle, drove through the scene immediately after the incident and spoke with a

citizen who was assisting the injured driver.

She is described as white, 45 to 50 years old, with blonde hair. She may have been driving a silver Mercedes.

She was travelling westbound on Quaker Rd. behind the driver who was charged.

Anyone with information is asked to call 905-735-7811.

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Forster brings hospital report to Queen's Park

In light of a recent Ontario Health Coalition commissioned report released last week, Welland MPP Cindy Forster is calling on the provincial government to rethink its "shortsighted" plans to replace five Niagara

hospitals with a single new facility.

"Today, we are calling on the Minister of Health, to re-evaluate the closures currently planned for the Niagara Health System," Forster during a media conference Thursday morning at Queen's Park, held to discuss the report called Niagara Health System: Under Threat, by John Lister.

— an international health policy expert from University of Waterloo and Director of University of Waterloo Health.

Forster said the Liberal government "has a responsibility to ensure that our publicly funded health care system is transparent and needs to be held accountable for putting Niagara's health care on the line."

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LOCAL NEWS

■ RESCUE: Ship featured at Port Colborne's Canal Days

Tall ship crew rescued by the United States Coast Guard

QMI Agency

All nine crew members from a tall ship that has been featured at Port Colborne's Canal Days festival for the past few years were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard earlier this week.

The Nova Scotia tall ship Liana's Ransom ran into trouble off the coast of Gloucester, Mass., early Monday after its

sails wrapped around the mast in high winds and the engines failed.

Rescue crews initially attempted to tow the ship, stranded about 130 km northeast of Boston, but rough seas caused the line to break, the coast guard said.

Increasingly windy conditions and high seas prompted authorities to order the crew

members aboard the Liana's Ransom to put on immersion suits and abandon ship.

One man was airlifted to hospital via helicopter after hitting his head while leaping from the boat during the rescue.

A dramatic photo showed one of the crew members jumping into the choppy swells from the stricken schooner and shows an emergency worker in a helicopter helping to pull a stretcher with an injured man up from the waves below.

The remaining passengers were taken back to shore in motor lifeboats.

"It was fortunate for the crew of the vessel that the owner reached out to us," Jay Woodhead, the command duty officer at Sector Boston's Command Center, said in a release.

Crews put a locator beacon on the 26-metre-long ship to keep track of it, and a sister vessel was dispatched to assist in recovering it back to port.

Liana's Ransom is a Halifax-based replica pirate ship that has participated in the past few Canal Days festivals in Port Colborne, offering tall ship cruises.

During the winters, it offers charters trips in St. Maarten.

IN BRIEF

Two arrested, drugs seized in Welland bust

Two arrests were made and more than \$35,000 in drugs seized following a police investigation in Welland.

In March, members of the Niagara Regional Police Welland street crime unit began investigating a male selling drugs from a Niagara St. apartment complex.

On Wednesday, a search warrant was executed at an apartment and police seized more than \$33,900 in suspected cocaine, more than \$1,700 in prescription painkillers and 700 in cash.

Rocco Vincent Munro, 53, of Welland, is charged with four counts of possession of

a controlled substance for the purpose of trafficking, possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime under \$5,000, unauthorized possession of a prohibited weapon, and two counts of failing to comply with a recognizance.

Munro was held in custody pending a bail hearing in St. Catharines Thursday.

Lynn Lachance, 46, of Welland, is charged with two counts of possession of a controlled substance for the purpose of trafficking and possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime under \$5,000.

Lachance was released on an officer in charge promise to appear.



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Foul play not suspected in brush fire body

Police are saying foul play is not suspected in the death of a person whose body was found by firefighters in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The body was found in the area near St. Paul Rd. and Stamford Townline Rd. by fire crews battling a brush fire on March 31.

On April 1, police spokesman Const. Phil Gavin said the post-mortem exam was completed. However, he said cause of death and identity of the person will not be released until police have spoken to the next of kin and the Ontario Fire Marshal's office finishes its own investigation.

The firefighters were protecting the homes from the fire when they discovered the body. They were dispatched at 5:36 p.m.

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DECLARES A 20% REFUND ON 2014 PREMIUMS



Front row from left to right, Rachael Sciliano (General Manager/CEO), Larry Hippie (President of the Board) receiving a refund cheque from Lloyd Roseboom (Vice-President of the Board), Domenic Iannone (Director) and David Gill (Director). Back row from left to right, John Dekker (Director), David Wiley (Director), Phillip Lambert (Director), Brian Heaslip (Director) and Howard Augustine (Director) at Bertie and Clinton's head office.

Bertie and Clinton is a local Mutual Insurance Company that specializes in providing farm insurance to its own members. By insuring with the company, you can also become a part owner and have a voice in how the company is run. Recently, the company declared a refund from surplus of 20% on property, liability and automobile premiums in 2014. Approximately \$2,370,000 was refunded to the policyholders provided they had been insured for at least one year and their policy was in force at December 31, 2014. Bertie and Clinton has declared a refund from surplus in eighteen of the last twenty-two years and has provided insurance for the Niagara Peninsula residents since 1890.

The company is run by nine directors who are elected by the policyholders at the Annual meeting. Each of the nine directors are elected for a three year term, with three being elected each year. At our 135th Annual Meeting held March 31, 2015 at the Royal Canadian Legion in Fonthill, Brian Heaslip of Wellandport and Lloyd Roseboom of Port Colborne were re-elected as Directors and John Dekker of Port Colborne was also elected as a Director, for a three year term.

Larry Hippie of Beamsville was elected to serve the company as the President of the Board and Lloyd Roseboom of Port Colborne will serve the company as Vice-President of the Board, for the 2015-2016 year. Rachael Sciliano of Welland is the General Manager/CEO.

Effective March 1, 2015, one of our Agents, Dale Hagar has begun his well-deserved Retirement. Mr. Hagar will be Board of Director from 1977 to 1986, serving as President of the Board in 1981. From 1986 to 2015, Mr. Hagar served as an Agent for Bertie and Clinton. We would like to thank Dale for his dedication to Bertie and Clinton Mutual and we wish him the very best on his Retirement. Judi Black of Welland has been hired as an Agent to service some of Mr. Hagar's policyholders. We are also currently searching for another candidate to help in servicing Mr. Hagar's policyholders.

We have currently updated and redesigned our Website and we also now provide credit card payments on line. Please do visit our new website at www.bertieandclinton.com

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LOCAL NEWS

CRIME

Paramedics seek protection

Associations want tougher penalties to deter attacks

ALISON LANGLEY
QMI Agency Niagara

Niagara first responders support

a push by the Ontario Paramedic Association to have special laws or penalties in place to help protect first responders from violence on the job.

"One of the most traumatic things that can happen to a paramedic is being attacked while trying to help somebody," said Rick Ferron, deputy chief of Niagara Emergency Medical Services.

He said there have been several incidents this year where paramedics have been off work due to injuries related to being assaulted.

He said Niagara EMS would support any changes to legislation that would protect first responders.

Shane Eickmann, public relations director with the Niagara Paramedic Association, said the local association also supports legislative change.

"We're fully in support of what they're pushing for," he said. "We've been saying that for years."

Following a pair of recent attacks on Ottawa paramedic crews, the Ontario Paramedic Association announced this week it wants to have special laws or penalties in place to help protect first responders.

Geoff MacBride, president of the organization which represents paramedics across the province, said paramedics constantly face threats or displays of violence.

"The Ontario Paramedic Association is very keen on seeing legislative change that makes assaulting a paramedic exactly the same as assaulting a police officer," said MacBride.

He said ideally, the association would like to see both carry the same punishment.

"And that is jail time."

"We're going to be taking an active role in the coming months in ensuring some sort of legislative change, and some education to the paramedics to make sure these acts are addressed appropriately," he said.

"Because if they're not, the message that's sent is that assaulting a paramedic is acceptable, and it absolutely is not."

The Niagara Falls Fire Department also supports any legislation that would protect

the safety of all first responders and provide deterrents to offenders, said Fire Chief Lee Smith.

"All first responders including fire and EMS should be included as we respond to medical calls and also have experienced incidents during fire responses," he said.

"Any responder — whether it be a nurse, a paramedic, a firefighter or a police officer — should be protected from violence in the workplace," Fort Erie Fire Chief Larry Coplen added.

In Niagara, paramedics receive training on how to assess and avoid possible violent situations. They also have panic alarms on their portable radios and dispatch checks in with paramedics on a regular basis when they're at a call.

A recent study published in the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services* revealed paramedics are exposed to verbal abuse, intimidation, physical assault, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Of the more than 1,800 paramedics from

Ontario and Nova Scotia who participated in the survey, 75% reported experiencing one or more violent episodes during the past year.

The most common form of violence was verbal assault, while 26% reported being physically attacked.

MacBride said paramedics face violent calls daily due to the nature of their work. "Paramedics role in our community is to help people on the worst day of their lives," he added.

"In doing that, (they) should never be victims to violence."

— WITH FILES FROM QMI AGENCY

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ROB TYMCZYZNY/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA
Niagara EMS would support any legislation that would protect first responders.

■ NIAGARA REGION

Brakes applied to new courthouse builds

ROB HOULE
QMI Agency Niagara

Regional councillors hit the brakes on the construction of new provincial offences courthouses.

Niagara Region corporate services committee members on Wednesday morning passed a motion directing staff to delay moving forward with a previously approved plan to build Provincial Offences

Act (POA) courthouses in Welland and St. Catharines over cost concerns, fewer trials expected and a potential Minister of the Attorney General that would allow many matters to be resolved online.

In an effort to save money, regional council decided in 2012 to consolidate its four courthouses — St. Catharines, Welland, Niagara Falls and a part-time court in Fort Erie — and to build new ones in Welland and St. Catharines. The price tag at the time put the cost of the two buildings at approximately \$15 million.

By the time council settled on the two locations for the courthouses in October 2012, the cost had ballooned to \$20 million. Provincial offences courts handle non-criminal infractions, such as Highway Traffic Act and municipal bylaw offences.

At the time the 2012 council made its decision, there had been a 11.5% increase in POA offences between 2005 and 2011. But a report from the joint board of management for Niagara region courts, a regional sub-committee, showed that between 2010 and 2014 there was a 21% decrease in the number of POA charges filed.

A staff report to committee also noted the possibility of the Attorney General is unlikely to make court consultations with an eye to streamlining POA court services. That method would shift POA infractions from the courthouse to an expanded online administrative monetary penalty system (AMPS), a faster and more flexible process for payment, appeal and collection of fines for minor ticketable offences up to \$1,000.

The consultation began in early March and is expected to take six weeks.

Armed with all that information, councillors passed a motion presented

NEW COURTHOUSES FACTS

The Region has approved spending of \$26.5 million for the construction of provincial offences courthouses — one in Welland, another in St. Catharines. The former District School Board of Niagara Academy at 20 Duncan St. in Welland was purchased in October at a cost of \$400,000 for a single-courtroom provincial offences building pegged at a cost of \$7.8 million.

The Region opted to build a three-courtroom facility in St. Catharines on property it owns at King and Carlisle streets, adjacent to the Niagara Regional Police station at 68 Church St. The total budget for that build is \$18.7 million.

Construction was expected to begin in the spring.

By Niagara Falls regional Coun. Bart Maves that takes another look at the need for new buildings.

"I think it's something that should be revisited," Maves said, echoing an earlier comment from Niagara Falls peer Selina Volpati. "I think the new councillors should revisit this. I think we should look at where we are on tickets and where we are on demand for court time ... because it's just become a fait accompli and it's just another capital project that seems like it's starting to ..."

Jennifer Ferens, the region's director of legal and court services who also sits on the joint board of management, told the committee the new courthouses are in the late stages of design. That is a good thing in relation to the timing of the Ministry of the Attorney General's notice of consultations regarding AMPS implementation in that it will allow council to be "nimble to address changes."

That nimbleness could even mean a hold on new construction.

Port Colborne regional Coun. David Barrick, chairman of the corporate services committee, asked staff to draft a report to get new councillors up to speed on the issue of new POA courthouses.

Lincoln Mayor Sandra Easton said

she needed more information.

"Surely, we're not building courthouses just for issues that have to do with traffic violations? So I really need much, much more information," Easton said.

Ferens said about 80% of cases in POA courts are traffic related.

The report before committee Wednesday initially only asked council to endorse design features for the courthouses, but Maves' amendment makes that endorsement conditional on council deciding to proceed with the projects.

"I'm fully supportive of the

amendment," Volpati said. "Anything but bricks and mortar. If we can do this online a better way with fewer bricks and less mortar, I will certainly support that."

rob.houle@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: RobH_Standard



CITY OF PORT COLBORNE PUBLIC NOTICE

CLOSING OF PART OF ORIGINAL ROAD ALLOWANCE BETWEEN LOTS 16 AND 17 CONCESSION 5 AND

CLOSING OF PART OF ORIGINAL ROAD ALLOWANCE BETWEEN LOTS 24 AND 25 CONCESSION 4

Take Notice that the Council of the City of Port Colborne will hold a public meeting to consider a by-law to permanently close part of the original road allowance between Lots 16 and 17, Concession 5 and to permanently close part of the original road allowance between Lots 24 and 25, Concession 4. These road close are for pieces of road allowance that were thought to have been stopped up and closed during the construction of the Welland Canal bypass.

Details of the Public Meeting:

Date: April 27, 2015
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Location: Council Chambers, 66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne

1. The portion of the unimproved and untraveled portion of the original road allowance between Lots 16 and 17, Concession 5, in the former geographic Township of Humberstone, now in the City of Port Colborne and municipally known as the unimproved and untraveled portion of Kleinsmith Road immediately south of the Townline Tunnel lands and designated as Part 10 on the Reference Plan 59R-15312 dated March 18, 2015. The parcel is a landlocked parcel north of the road allowance closed by by-law 34/12/14/3/196 and registered as Instrument Number R0719834 during the construction of the Welland Canal bypass.

2. The portion of the unimproved and untraveled portion of the original road allowance between Lots 24 and 25, Concession 4, north of the road allowance between concessions 3 and 4 and south of the Welland Canal, in the former geographic Township of Humberstone, now in the City of Port Colborne, designated as Parts 1, 7 and 8 on the Reference Plan 59R-15310 dated March 18, 2015.

The Reference Plans illustrating the two road allowances are available for inspection (together with this notice) on the municipality's website www.portcolborne.ca and in the Clerk's Office.

Written and/or oral comments will be considered at the public meeting and can be forwarded to the undersigned. Written comments should be submitted by no later than Friday, April 17. Council will hear any person or their counsel, solicitor or agent who claims his/her land will be prejudicially affected by the proposed by-law and who applies to be heard at the meeting.

Additional information related to the road closing can be obtained by contacting the City Clerk at 905-835-2901 ext. 106.

Dated at Port Colborne this 19th day of March 2015.

Ashley Grigg, Clerk
City of Port Colborne
66 Charlotte Street
Port Colborne, ON L3K 3C8

LOCAL NEWS

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Dr. Valerie Jaeger is a proven community leader and dedicated physician who has made a commitment to the health and well-being of Niagara's residents. She also understands how social and economic conditions shape people's opportunities to improve their health. "It is important that all sectors of our community invest in health-supporting actions to create environments that support increased prosperity and personal well-being."



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■ COMMUNITY



Submitted photo/AUTISM ONTARIO NIAGARA CHAPTER
Sharon Svob of Wainfleet holds an autism awareness flag at the Wainfleet flag raising in 2014.

Flags to be raised for autism awareness

CHRISTOPHER BREEN
Special to QM Agency Niagara

Raise, respect and realize.

Those three words represent what World Autism Awareness Day, intends to accomplish around the globe.

Autism Ontario will host its third annual Raise the Flag awareness campaign today.

"Raise. Respect. Realize. That's really what we're trying to do on World Autism Awareness Day," Jordan Shaw, communication and volunteer co-ordinator for Autism Ontario Niagara Chapter, said.

"We raise the flag to show respect, love and support and make a promise that everyone can realize their full potential." Flag raisings will take place at city and town halls across the region throughout the day, including Welland, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls at 10 a.m., Port Colborne and Niagara-on-the-Lake at 10 a.m.; Grimsby and West Lincoln at noon, and Wainfleet and St. Catharines at 2 p.m.

"Raising awareness is important because caring and supportive communities can only be formed when everyone in that community works together," Shaw said.

"By educating the public about autism and the challenges faced by these families dealing with autism, we can work to support them."

There will be a flag raising at the Pen Centre in Catharines at 11 a.m., with schools across Niagara also following suit at various times to raise awareness in their communities.

Stacey Edgar, a volunteer with the local Autism Ontario chapter, will be raising

the flag at St. Catharines city hall.

"(This is) excellent because there is so much about autism that is not known," said Edgar, who has a son with Asperger's Syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder.

"The thing that people (think) they know when you talk to them is usually false."

Although she worked with people who have autism, Edgar didn't immediately recognize the signs in her own son.

Others in the autism community are equally happy to see events that raise awareness.

"It's fantastic to see autism awareness put in the spotlight," Alexander Parker, founder of Jigsaw: An Autism Community, said.

"Niagara has some of the highest rates of autism in Canada."

Parker who is also a group leader and counsellor with Autism Ontario, said he started Jigsaw because the rate of juvenile autism in the region is high.

To show support, Autism Ontario is asking people to wear red. For the organization, the colour represents the passion and strength that exists to bring autism awareness to the forefront, not only on World Autism Awareness Day, but throughout the year as well.

The Raising the Flag initiative encourages communities and nations to promote early diagnosis and intervention.

"We've had to bring siblings and parents break free from feeling helpless and isolated," Parker said. "Information, knowledge, shared strategies and new ideas help the autism community grow tighter and stronger."

LOCAL NEWS

In the swing with spring



MIKE DIRNSTEIN / QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

It might not be ideal golf weather around Niagara, but that doesn't stop avid golfers from getting ready for the season. Bert Manansala of St. Catharines stopped in at the Sportsplex in Niagara Falls to brush up on his game.



Port Colborne man arrested for sexual assault

A Port Colborne man has been arrested following investigation into a decade-old sexual assault.

In March the Niagara Regional Police

sexual assault unit began investigating the alleged historical offences, said to have taken place about 10 years ago.

On Wednesday, as a result of the investigation, an arrest was made.

Reginald William Shepherd, 65, is charged with sexual assault, sexual interference and invitation to sexual touching.

Shepherd was held in custody pending a bail hearing Thursday in St. Catharines.

Police believe there may be additional victims who have not yet come forward.

Anyone with information is asked to call Det. Brian Essery at 905-735-2111, ext. 5125 or Det. Tracey Rimando at ext. 5123.

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■ HEALTH CARE

Health Minister confident in Smith

ALLAN BENNER

QMI Agency Niagara

Responding to a scathing report on Niagara's hospital restructuring plans, Ontario's health minister and local physicians are defending the Niagara Health System's chief executive officer.

After the Ontario Health Coalition published a report by British international health policy expert John Lister, a senior lecturer at the University of Cambridge University in England, Ontario's chief health minister Dr. Eric Hoskins as well as NHS chief of staff Dr. Tom Stewart both released statements expressing their confidence in the direction of Kevin Smith's 2012 supervisors report that recommended closing five Niagara hospitals and replacing them with a single new hospital site to be constructed in Niagara Falls.

"We want to make sure that our hospitals are providing the best care possible for Ontarians. That's why we appointed Dr. Kevin Smith to put Niagara Health Services in a strong position to deliver high quality health care for Niagara patients," Hoskins said.

In his 15-page review, Lister identified a lack of public consultation as a major flaw in Smith's original report.

But Hoskins said there was substantial consultation in Smith's report.

"I am confident in the work that Dr. Smith did, which included speaking with thousands of hospital members and health care workers," Hoskins said.

Meanwhile, he said progress is continuing to be made towards the implementation of Smith's recommendations.

"Our government is providing NHS with \$26.2-million to plan for a new hospital in Niagara Falls and two urgent care centres, as proposed by Dr. Smith's report," he said.

After speaking with his fellow physicians at NHS hospitals, Stewart said plans will enhance the quality of hospital services.

"As NHS chief of staff I speak on behalf of all physicians departments. I'm noting Dr. Smith's report provides a strong foundation for the overall improvement of healthcare in Niagara," Stewart said.

"With regard to patient experience and quality, as well as doctor recruitment and work life, we are headed in the right direction. A new site in Niagara Falls can only improve the situation, and there is tremendous excitement at the renewal of our system underway."

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LOCAL NEWS

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BIZ BUZZ

Family Sports says goodbye

On April 2, 1992, Family Sports opened its doors.

On Tuesday, almost 23 years to the day, Lyle Lichtry stood in the near-empty store trying to find a way to say goodbye.

The owner of the family-run business recently made the difficult decision to throw in the proverbial towel and embark on a new chapter in life — retirement.

There was no ringing buzzer to announce the period's end. Instead, the Seaway Mall store quietly closed its doors Sunday.

Lichtry's regular customers were let in on the little-known secret through the last month.

"They were overwhelmed. Shocked. Some said me I couldn't close," he says with a smile, while adding he's grateful for their support.

"I just told them, 'It's retirement. I need some time to myself.'

After 45 years in the retail industry, Lichtry felt it was a move he was ready to make.

He originally moved to Welland from Windsor to manage the Woolco in the mall. More than four years later, the store was purchased by Walmart and closed, he says.

Wanting to stay in the Rose City, Lichtry decided it was time to go into business on his own.

A true sports fan at heart, he seemed only fitting to turn his passion into a career.

He made it his goal to turn Family Sports into a household name in Welland.

"I'm blessed to have accomplished that mission," he says with pride.

Lichtry ensured the business never shied from offering assistance in the community, sponsoring dozens of teams, participating in fundraisers and donating prizes for countless events.

Pictures of the young teams sponsored by Family Sports were always proudly displayed in the store's entrance way, alongside the slogan: Come join the family!

"This is why we did this. Why we had the store," Lichtry says as he fondly looks over the many framed photos.

"This is what it should all be about."

Despite still having a strong love for his job, his reasons for retirement are simple.

"Age. That and retail is so demanding hours wise," says the 63 year old, who lives in Welland with wife Jeannie.

There was a moment during a recent visit with one of his four grandchildren that make Lichtry stop and think.

Four-year-old Andrew piped in with

the question: "Papa, do you live at the store?"

Cute as they were, the little boy's words were not lost on Lichtry, who has since grown excited to be able to spend more time with all of his grandkids.

"It's a real commitment," he says of owning your own business.

He thought about selling Family Sports but just couldn't do it knowing he would no longer be responsible for the level of service his customers received.

While Lichtry made sacrifices to keep the store up and running to his own high standards, he credits his staff, as well as the Seaway Mall for keeping his business a success all these years.

"I couldn't have done it without them."

"Retail is a ladder. You've got your ups and you've got your downs," he says, while adding many changes were seen over the years with the evolution of online sales and retail giants.

"I was glad to get to this point."

Lichtry spent Monday and Tuesday packing up what remains of the sports-lover sanctuary, with frequent stops to chat with shoppers who would tap on the closed glass doors in an effort to say their goodbyes.

His favorite part of the job has always been interacting with customers and "just shooting the breeze."

"That's what made this company survive is the support from our customers," he says.

"I'll miss them just as much as they'll miss me."

Lichtry hopes to take up a hobby with his new spare time and may even take it a few live sporting events.

He laughs as he talks about the year the store opened, when the Toronto Blue Jays won the World Series.

It was a real business booster for Family Sports, but not the title the die-hard Maple Leaf fans hoped to see Toronto claim.

Lichtry has since been anticipating a Stanley Cup win from the divisive team, so he could celebrate with his customers in store.

"But I just couldn't wait for them anymore," he quips.

The Tribune's Biz Buzz column appears every Wednesday. If you have a business tip, send it to marianne.firth@sunmedia.ca or call 905-684-7251 ext. 1144.

NOTE: *Biz Buzz will not appear for the next two weeks, but will return Wednesday, April 22.*



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■ POVERTY

Niagara getting extra money to fight homelessness

CHERYL CLOCK
QMI Agency Niagara

Two years, and an extra \$3.78 million to help the homeless in Niagara.

It offers some assurance that the province is taking the seriousness of homelessness seriously, says Katherine Chislett, commissioner of community services for Niagara Region.

The announcement increases the provincial contribution to homelessness services in Niagara to \$6.89 million per year – an additional \$1.89 million annually – through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

And what's even better, is the two-year commitment, says Chislett.

"We weren't expecting this investment," she says.

"It demonstrates a strong commitment when you consider (the province's) budget constraints, that there're continuing to invest in homelessness."

"It really shows they're putting their money where their policies are."

Last year, the province gave the usual \$5 million, then announced late in the fall it would give another \$1.89 million to Niagara, to be spent by the end of this month.

Another two years of that is promising, she says.

On any given night in Niagara, there are at least 300 people across Niagara living outdoors, in an emergency shelter or in transitional housing. And these are likely many more who are doubled up, living outside, couch surfing or in programs not funded by the region, she says.

And consider these facts:

Since 2008, the region has seen a 50%

increase in people receiving Ontario Works.

There are about 22,000 people on OW in Niagara.

13% of all the working-age people in Niagara are on assistance – Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, or Employment Insurance.

Existing programs will continue. Think shelters, housing help centres, street outreach and transitional housing. Long-term plans will be created, on how to spend the extra money, says Chislett.

"The province needs to be creative and make good service investments," she says.

These ideas will be taken to the Public Health and Social Services Committee at the region on May 12, then sent to the province and regional council for approval.

The province will also give Niagara \$4.78 million this fiscal year for affordable housing, through a separate program.

Homelessness needs to be addressed in two ways – emergency shelters for people in crisis and longer-term solutions to find homes for people who are chronically homeless, Chislett says. Shelters stop them from drifting back, says Chislett.

Shelters are the most expensive part of all homelessness programs, says Chislett. One bed in an emergency shelter costs \$1,600 a month.

"We have to help people break the cycle of homelessness," she says.

"You can't end homelessness if you only focus on crisis supports. But you need them because emergencies happen."

"But you need to pay attention to prevention and helping people get out."

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■ MENTAL ILLNESS: A disease 'that can be treated'

Former Olympian struggled in silence

ALISON LANGLEY
QMI Agency Niagara

Clara Hughes didn't set out to become a mental health advocate.

"My struggle is very small compared to the people I meet," the six-time Olympian said at a recent luncheon fundraiser at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

"Everyone has a story to share. I bet there are New York Times best-selling novels within this room."

Hughes said she shares her personal struggle with depression in hopes of stemming the tide of stigma that surrounds mental illness.

"Mental illness is just that," she said. "It's an illness that can be treated."

The speed skater and cyclist participated in the Olympic Games between 1996 and 2012 and is the only Canadian athlete to win medals at both the Winter and Summer Olympics.

Several of those medals were won, she said, as she struggled in silence.

She struggled with being an elite athlete and struggled with bouts of deep depression and an eating disorder.

When a team doctor first suggested she was depressed and offered up a myriad of possible treatment options, Hughes dismissed the diagnosis.

"Nothing was going to tell me I was weak," she said.

"I was going to fix this and nobody was going to help me because I could do it all by myself."

But she soon realized she couldn't do it alone and sought treatment.

She said depression is not a sign of weakness and that it can be overcome with treat-

ment.

"Talk about it," she urged the audience. "Don't suffer in silence." Last year, she embarked on a four-month cross-Canada ride to raise awareness of mental health.

Clara's Big Ride covered more than 11,000 kilometres, and she passed through 105 communities in all 10 provinces and all three territories.

What public events such as her cross-country ride help to get the conversations started about mental health, Hughes said much more needs to be done.

"When I heard about that horrible crime in the French Alps, it makes me realize we have a long way to go," she said, referring to reports that the co-pilot who officials say deliberately crashed a German-bound plane into the mountains had been treated for depression.

"Mental illness is not a choice. It is something more powerful than Niagara Falls," Hughes added.

The event benefited Niagara Women's Addiction Recovery Mission. The agency provides personal support recovery programs for women and families with addiction issues.

In addition to Hughes, three-time Olympic boxer Mike Strange shared his story of running across Canada to raise funds to fight childhood cancer.

Strange ran more than 3,100 kilometres from Thunder Bay to Canada's west coast in 2012 for Childhood Cancer Canada. In 2014, he ran 99 marathons in 90 days in support of McMaster University's Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute and Ronald McDonald Houses Charities of Canada.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ NIAGARA COLLEGE: Dan Gheesling entertains Welland audience

Big Brother star shines light on good leadership

GREG FURNINGER
QMI Agency Niagara

Hayli Carpenter showed up for the motivational talk on effective leadership — but, truth be told, it was prime time for the *Big Brother* "superfan" to get close to the man who's been called the CBS reality show's best player of all time.

Dan Gheesling, winner of Season 10 and runnerup of Season 14, was at Niagara College on Wednesday to talk based on his latest book, *Clean Your Own Mirror: 6 Necessary Duties to Lead and Influence People*.

Despite mostly wanting to get a personal glimpse of the dashing 31-year-old, Carpenter said she walked away having been party to an engaging speech.

"It wasn't normal textbook stuff," said Carpenter, who was joined by her boyfriend, Frederick Brown, both of whom made the trip to the Welland campus from St. Catharines.

Calling Gheesling "talented" and "manipulative" on the show, Brown was curious about Gheesling in real life.

"I wanted to see how much of a different person he was" off-camera, he said.

He wasn't alone. Just more than 200 people shelled out



GREG FURNINGER/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA
Dan Gheesling, winner of U.S. reality TV show Big Brother 10 and runnerup of Big Brother 14, poses for a group photo at Niagara College while giving a motivational speech on being an effective leader.

\$5 apiece for tickets to see the man from the Detroit suburb of West Bloomfield, Mich., who now makes appearances at universities and colleges in Canada and the U.S. to speak about effective leadership, based on his experiences as an entrepreneur, successful

TV contestant and football coach at Michigan State University.

His appearance was intimate. In a presentation peppered with celebrity and pop culture references, he managed to throw in a few Canuckisms about Tim Hortons and Timbits and the Apple Store in Toronto.

"When this is over, I promise, I'll make you a better leader," he said.

At the least, Gheesling quipped, he could help the college students in the crowd become better daters.

And along that line, the first of the six "duties" he presented to becoming a great leader is "listen like it's your first date." In other words, be interested. He said listening to what others had to say was key in his TV success.

"I was using it to deceive people, but you can use it in your everyday life to help people."

To that end, he told people to tweet our comments and photos of his visit, including his list of six duties, using #DanABC to let people know he didn't attend his Welland rally.

His other duties to being a good leader: Actually give a crap; Be like a drive-thru, by always being open, including giving to criticism; Do not sink your own ship, by gossiping or failing to squelch it; Always be last, by putting your team members first and by spending time with the shy types who tend to stay at the back of the line; and, lastly, Clean your own mirror, by being introspective and questioning about your leadership on a daily basis.

Gheesling started his talk with a definition: "A leader is a person who people actually want to follow."

He ended with a question-and-answer session with the audience. Most queries were about his reality TV past.

And for people now moving in to the third season of *Big Brother Canada*, Gheesling offered his take on which house guest he likes best so far: Jordan Parhar.

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